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Rural information needs. Final report for Mid Wales Library and Information Partnership

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**Rural Information Needs
Report
April 2008**

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Ceredigion Local Health Board
Ceredigion Community Health Council
Brecknock and Radnor Community Health Council
Ethnic Business Support Unit
Citizens Advice Bureau
Beacon Foods
Rachel's Dairy
CAVO
PAVO
Institute of Rural Health
Business Eye
NFU Cymru
Home Start

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **scope** of this project was to look at rural information needs within Ceredigion and Powys, with relevance to health, economic and ethnic migrant needs.

The **aim** was to inform the Mid Wales Library and Information Partnership as to any possible collaborative collection development actions in those areas and the **objectives** were to obtain views of key informants, prioritise any needs and map them to existing provision.

Key Points:

- Powys is the most sparsely populated area in Wales and had the largest percentage population increase between 2001 and 2006. Current population is approximately 131.1 thousand and just over 25% are pensioners.
- Ceredigion has an approximate population of 77.2 thousand of which 23% are pensioners. The county also has the smallest percentage of children in Wales at 16%.
- Health collections already exist with the national Welsh Assembly schemes for Book Prescription and Child and Family Bibliotherapy.
- Ystradgynlais-1 and Cardigan-Teifi are now considered the most deprived areas in both counties, according to 2005 revised Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- Main barriers to information access in the rural areas are lack of public transport and low income, as opposed to unemployment.
- Citizen information available to wider access in rural Ceredigion and Powys through Welsh Assembly funding for CAB outreach services.
- The Local Authorities over the next 3 years will be looking to engage more with the local population, and the ethnic minority migrants, to ensure actions toward their Visions for 2020.
- Ethnic minority migrants consistently use informal networks of friends and family to obtain information, jobs etc.
- The ethnic migrant students clearly used the college libraries but some did not make the cross-over to the public service.
- English graded readers are required by the ethnic migrants. Whether or not county collections could be built up is a matter for the MWLIP, but it might be more beneficial to have availability at the public libraries, as opposed to just at the colleges where their classes are held.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope

The scope of this project was to assess information needs of users in the Mid Wales Library and Information Partnership (MWLIP) area, namely Ceredigion and Powys. There were three strands to assess:

- Health information (with emphasis on patients)
- Economic (with emphasis on employability and enterprise)
- Migration (new economic migrants)

1.2 Aim and objectives

The aim of the project was to inform the MWLIP for possible collaborative collection development activities in the areas concerned and the objectives were to:

- Obtain views of key informants
- Prioritise the main information needs
- Map any needs to existing provision

1.3 Overview of counties

Ceredigion and Powys are the most rural counties within Wales and although they offer a perceived idyllic rural lifestyle, this is accompanied by problems of movement around the counties due to basic provision of bus and train transport, limited road network and disparate service provision, not least in the health sector.

Powys has a population of approximately 131.1¹ thousand residents and was the Local Authority (LA) with the largest percentage population change in Wales between mid 2001 and mid 2006; an increase of 3.7 percent. The population currently comprises 24,037 children (aged 0-15), 74,975 adults of working age and 32,147 pensioners (female 60 and over, male 65 and over). Although Powys had the greatest population increase, it still remains the most sparsely populated area covering 5,196 square kilometres, with a density of 25 people per square kilometre. However, pensioners make up 25 percent of the local population and children 18 percent.

¹ Welsh Assembly Government, 2008. *Wales's Population - A Demographic View*. Statistics for Wales. Mid 2006 figures. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government. URL: 23rd March 2008
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/40382313/statistics/population/pop2008/2088373/walespop08e2.pdf?lang=en>

By comparison Ceredigion has a population of approximately 77.2 thousand residents and had a population increase between mid 2001 and mid 2006 of 2.4 percent. The population comprises 12,097 children (aged 0-15), 47,464 adults of working age and 17,599 pensioners (female 60 and over, male 65 and over). The percentage of children, as a percentage of the population in Ceredigion (16 percent), is the smallest in Wales, with pensioners making up 23 percent of the local population. Ceredigion is smaller than Powys with a density of 43 people per square kilometre over an area of 1,790 square kilometres.

The economic background to both counties is similar with light industries, retail and wholesale businesses, agricultural and tourism being the mainstay income generators. Over the last few years, both counties have experienced increasing inward migration, particularly from the new Accession 8 countries that joined the EU in 2004.

2 METHODS

2.1 Data collection

The information was collected through a series of telephone conversations and face-to-face conversations with main informants, with a questionnaire for the economic migrants. It was decided that a catch-all questionnaire or interview schedule was difficult to achieve because key informants were discussing different areas and questioning was not applicable across the board. The basic questions for the key informants can be found in Appendix 1.

The EU migrants were contacted through the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) co-ordinators in the local Colleges of Further Education. They allowed access to the classes, where the students were seen individually and taken through the questions. One group were taken through the questions with their tutor alone.

In general, some informants were a little reticent about voicing opinions, so names and offices of people have been withheld.

3 HEALTH

3.1 Patient liaison

The Community Health Councils (CHCs) in Wales offer the public and patients information and advice on health and the NHS related services. Essentially, they are the local health watchdog for the local communities and act as patient liaison and advocacy where complaints arise over services or practice. They also act as an information bridge between the health service policy makers and the public. They work independently of the NHS and, apart from a small staff in each office, generally comprise volunteers, County and Community Council members, members of charitable organisations or particular special skilled areas, if required, and members appointed by the Welsh Assembly Government. There is no standard as to which voluntary body sits on council but applications are dealt with through PAVO (Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations) or CAVO (Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations).

Ceredigion has one council and Powys has two based in the electoral areas of (i) Montgomeryshire, (ii) Brecon and Radnor. Both Ceredigion and Powys receive approximately the same amount of enquiries per annum, in the range of 170-200 and these could be anything from 'where's the nearest NHS dentist?' to complaints about hospital services in hospitals outside the area where patients have been referred for treatment.

All information from these councils is distributed through leaflets to GP surgeries, dental practices, opticians, pharmacies, hospitals and public libraries. They also maintain office websites and post information from meetings or discussions on policy making concerning the general public in the local papers and hold publicity fairs at hospitals and clinics. During office hours the public can visit, telephone or email the local offices for information or advocacy. Although the CHCs have a link with the public libraries for information distribution, they currently do not have any link with the hospital libraries.

"No, I don't foresee a link-up with the hospital libraries unless the libraries deal with the public or patients – and that's up to the Trusts involved." CHC Officer

Both hospital libraries only provide a service for medical/clinical and related staff and students. However, they both have a link with the two County library services through the provision of the Welsh Assembly Government national Book Prescription and Child and Family Bibliotherapy schemes, but these are only available to staff so that they are familiar with them for referral purposes.

Any service changes with these libraries at Brecon and Aberystwyth is entirely up to the NHS Trusts involved.

3.2 Local Health Boards (LHBs)

The commissioning arm for local services e.g. primary care, pharmacies, dentists etc., is currently dealt with by the Local Health Boards. This is about to change with the new reconfiguration of NHS services in Wales, and particularly in Ceredigion where the LHB commissioning is likely to be amalgamated with Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. Service information and policy and consultation documents are available to the public from the LHBs, as are complaint forms if there are service problems. Both Powys and Ceredigion have their strategy documents for Health Social Care and Well Being 2008-2012 in conjunction with their Local Authorities and partnership organisations. These are public consultation documents feeding into the Local Authority visions “Ceredigion 2020” and “Powys 2020” and have been drafted through local community consultation, and actions have been taken through the involvement of different partnership groups e.g. Communities First.

The Rural Health Plan Working Group, announced in January 2008, has been set up by the Welsh Assembly Government to report in September 2008 in order to “**...devise a Rural Health Plan that will ensure the future health needs of rural communities are met in ways which reflect the particular conditions and characteristics of rural Wales.**” Health Minister Edwina Hart Friday, 11 January. The plan is to engage with the local population to help devise a framework.

All consultative documents, health leaflets, service provision information are available to the public and can be found either online at the local authority or organisation HQ, or in hard copy at public libraries, LHB offices, CHC offices and other council offices.

3.3 Health information

Health information and general complaint advice is available to the public through NHS Direct Wales. They are contactable via phone or online. This nurse-led, 24 hour, 7 day a week service offers information on health issues and lifestyle, local services and a health encyclopedia. For those who are deaf or hard of hearing, a text phone system is available on a different number, or via the RNID type talk. The service is also available over the phone in 120 different languages and the online service is also translated into Welsh, French, Mandarin, Somali, Bengali, Cantonese, Arabic, Polish, Urdu, Punjabi, Portuguese, Russian and Czech. All communities are well equipped with the availability of health information and the collaboration with the Book Prescription and Child and Family Bibliotherapy schemes work well.

4 ECONOMIC and SOCIAL

4.1 Rural deprivation

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (c. 2000/2001) highlighted two areas within Ceredigion and three areas within Powys that became part of the Communities First programme. The Communities First programme is a Welsh Assembly Government initiative for local regeneration through the inclusion and empowerment of the local community, voluntary and community organisations, public and private sector authorities, all working in partnership. All 5 areas have unique factors and run different projects to benefit their particular community. They were selected for the Communities First programme under the 10 “Communities of Interest”, as opposed to being in the 100 most deprived areas in Wales, although, the project in the Welshpool housing estate was run as a pilot project within a deprived area.

This Index was revised in November 2005 and the revised figures show that now the most deprived area in Powys is Ystradgynlais-1 with a ranking of 203 (most deprived) and a deprivation score of 41.3 (least deprived 1.4 to most deprived 78.1), followed by Newtown south with a ranking of 382 (most deprived) and a deprivation score of 32.6 (least deprived 1.4 to most deprived 78.1). In Ceredigion the most deprived area is Cardigan–Teifi ranking 218, with a deprivation score of 40.3, followed by Cardigan–Rhyd-y-Fuwch ranking 443 and a score of 30.3. So, currently Ystradgynlais-1 and Cardigan–Teifi are considered the most deprived areas throughout both counties.

Table 4.1 below shows the employment figures at June 2007. It is interesting to note that self-employed numbers in Ceredigion run at 28 percent of the total employed in the county, indicating a lack of jobs available and a necessity to create one’s own work. In 2004, the Wales Rural Observatory reported on *Living and Working in Rural Wales*² and contacted 468 people in Powys and 332 in Ceredigion. In their report they showed that respondents from Ceredigion and Powys were twice as likely to be self-employed than those from Conwy and Carmarthenshire.

	Est. Population	Total Employed	Employees	Self- Employed	S E Rate	F/T	P/T
Ceredigion	77.2	31,000	22,000	9,000	28%	23,000	9,000
Powys	131.1	55,000	43,000	11,000	20.5%	41,000	14,000

Table 4.1: Employment June 2007³.

Source: Welsh Assembly Government

² Wales Rural Observatory (2004) *Living and Working in Rural Wales*, Cardiff

³ <http://www.statswales.gov.uk/TableViewer/tableView.aspxReportId=3339>

The benefits data for May 2007 covering the working age population in Ceredigion and Powys gives a stark indication of the level of illness and disability in the areas. Although the number of Jobseekers is relatively low, the number of people claiming incapacity benefits amounts to 8 percent of the working age population who are on benefits within Ceredigion and 7.5 percent in Powys see table 4.2⁴ below.

	Ceredigion (n=5,050)	Powys (n=8,050)
Jobseekers	590 (1.2%)	1,160 (1.5%)
Incapacity Benefits	3,780 (8%)	5,650 (7.5%)
Lone Parents	520 (1.1%)	950 (1.3%)
Other Benefits	160 (0.3%)	290 (0.4%)

Table 4.2: Working Age Group Benefits May 2007.⁵
Government

Source: Welsh Assembly

Those in very rural communities suffer from lack of access to information networks i.e. broadband, mobile phone networks, which impede the development of business and entrepreneurship in such areas. This is compounded by the lack of regular public transport which reduces access to centres of information and commerce – things taken for granted in the more urban areas, particularly for those on low income who cannot afford a car. All this adds to the measure of social exclusion felt in rural areas, barriers to employment and income generation, and increases a reliance on the voluntary sector.

2008 brings to an end the first round of Communities First, with the consultation process for the next step, Communities Next, being under way and about to close in May 2008. It is foreseen that the transition year to Communities next will be 2009-2010.

“Transport issues and the concerns of the agricultural and tourism industries are especially important.... This combination of issues indicates the need to link the rural Communities First Partnerships more strongly to the Welsh Assembly Government’s wider rural work, in the context of the Assembly Government’s Rural Development Plan, and to develop specific, appropriate guidance and funding options for them.”⁶

Although the issue of child poverty is at the heart of the Community First agenda, the next round will concentrate on other factors affecting child poverty e.g. up-skilling parents to increase employability in low income, low employment areas. There is no doubt that with partnership working there is a

⁴ Figures rounded to nearest 5

⁵ <http://www.statswales.gov.uk/TableViewer/tableView.apx?ReportId=5105>

⁶ Communities Next. Consultation on the future of the Communities First Programme. January 2008, Communities First and Welsh Assembly Government. URL: <http://www.wales.gov.uk/consultations/currentconsultations/communitiesnext/?lang=en>

great deal of information and support available, and that local community engagement is of paramount importance for these partnerships to work properly. In the case of Communities First, it is the people of the community who must drive the actions they seek, so their involvement is imperative all the way through. However, general apathy and resignation must be overcome for partnerships to work.

4.2 Citizens Advice Bureaux

Most towns host a Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). This service ***“...helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice, and by influencing policymakers.”***

⁷ CAB website

The main point about CAB is that it is an entirely free service for all who choose to use it. It is, therefore, at the top of the list for places to go for information and help, particularly those on low income. Once again this organisation is a national registered charity, with all the offices having charitable status and reliant on outside funding and volunteers. The Welsh Assembly Government is currently funding CAB to maintain outreach centres in rural areas so that the local community has greater access to information and advice. These outreach centres are sited at GP practices or medical centres in the community for a limited amount of hours during the week and outreach officers will make home visits for those people who cannot attend the offices. Ceredigion currently has 2 main offices, Cardigan and Aberystwyth, with added outreach centres in surgeries at Aberaeron and Tregaron in the north of the county and Cardigan hospital, and surgeries at Adpar and Llandysul in the south of the county. Powys has 4 main offices at Machynlleth, Newtown, Brecon and Ystradgynlais and then a further 7 offices in surgeries at Llanidloes, Welshpool, Knighton, Presteigne(2), Llanfair Caereinion and Llanfyllin, with a further 3 smaller outreach centres at Caersws, Llansantffraid and Llanrhaedr.

“...well, this funding is ongoing, but for how long is anyone’s guess!”

CAB manager

In 1997/1998 the Aberystwyth CAB was part of a study looking at citizen information provision throughout the UK⁸ and then it showed that the greatest amount of enquiries dealt with were consumer and credit (including utilities), followed by benefits information. Currently, although up-to-date figures were unattainable, the bureau manager confirmed that benefits information is the greatest information sought, and this is not only what benefits are available to people, but what actions can be taken when they do not seem to be getting anywhere with the Government agencies such as Job Centre Plus. Apart from basic information leaflets about CAB being available at libraries, no further link-up could be envisaged due to the fact that CAB run specialized

⁷ <http://www.citizensadvice.or.uk/index/aboutus.htm>

⁸ Marcella, R., Baxter, G., 2000. Citizenship information service provision in the United Kingdom: a study of 27 case agencies. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*; 32(1), 9-25.

information systems that are constantly updated and the current outreach funding is helping them cover the community.

4.3 Social inclusion

All public sector organisations are now required to operate fairness to all under the Disability Equality Duty (DED) and that has involved the set-up and operation of equality schemes, which are frameworks for improvement, be they disability, race, age or gender. These are ongoing in the 2 authorities Ceredigion and Powys and schemes are currently under review with Equality Impact Assessments to see what has been achieved so far, what actions have not been achieved and what is going to be tackled over the next 3 years. These schemes are all feeding into the community visions for 2020.

Interviews with local government officers have confirmed that although the separate frameworks are up and running, the timescale involved in all has been tight and the impact assessments are falling short of where they should be at this time. The question of lack of public engagement arose in both counties and the difficulties of partnership working where the public and voluntary organisations have been invited to meetings and have not attended. This has resulted in time slippage. Partnership working has its own problems of trying to get everyone together at the same time and then trying to get a consensus of opinion. Both counties will be looking to increase public engagement over the next three years.

Ceredigion sent out 1,600 questionnaires, available also in Braille and large print form, at the start of the disability scheme and received 376 back. The results showed that people in Ceredigion were very satisfied with how information was distributed and were happy with the library service. When asked if they would like different methods of information distribution, the majority preferred information in leaflet form. Mobile libraries in Ceredigion serve the more rural areas of the county on a monthly basis and also provide a home service for those house-bound people with disabilities or illness.

Powys conducted a Residents Survey in 2007⁹ and the response to information distribution was the same, with most residents wanting to receive information in leaflet form or in the local media. They were also asked if they would be interested in receiving a quarterly newspaper for residents and 86 percent of respondents said yes, with 75 percent of them being interested in news on council services and policies, and 74 percent interested in a local events guide. 7 percent of respondents said that they currently got information from the library, but when asked how they would like to receive information in the future, the response went down to 2 percent from the library and by email increased from 2 percent to 5 percent. Overall, residents gave a 79 percent satisfaction rate to the library service, and a 58 percent satisfaction rating to the information and advice centres. The mobile library service in

⁹ Powys County Council, July 2007. *Residents' Attitudes Surveys*. Final Report. Powys County Council. url: http://www.powys.gov.uk/uploads/media/ResidentsSurveyFinalReport_en.pdf

Powys is a fortnightly service, but it differs from Ceredigion as it does not deliver to the homes of those who are house-bound.

In February 2007, the Wales Rural Observatory produced a report *Coping with Access to Services*¹⁰ which stated that almost two thirds of people in rural Wales never used a library, with 29 percent using the service once a month and 9 percent of those using the mobile services. They attributed a drop-off in service use to the availability of the Internet and online services, even though the distribution of libraries and mobiles services was good.

Voluntary organisations in rural areas are particularly stretched and even those charitable organisations that receive basic funding are in the predicament of needing to rely on voluntary help from within the local community. There are quite a few charitable organisations looking out for families in need, one parent families and the children, homeless people, alcohol and drug addicts etc., and they all have representation in Ceredigion and Powys because there is a great need. What is very noticeable is that the strategic or umbrella end of these organisations usually gets funding from the Welsh Assembly in some form or other, whereas the field workers are generally voluntary. One charity officer commented:

“..transport is the issue here and the expense of trying to get around the county to see clients – it costs so much. We also have a real recruitment problem with volunteers but after we’ve put leaflets in the library our recruitment figures go up; it’s free so it’s a real help!” Family Charity Worker.

4.4 Rural business

Business Eye is the free information service run by the Welsh Assembly Government in Wales. Business information can be sought over the phone or online. Someone needing help with new or established business contacts the call-centre in Cardiff and is then registered with them. Their details and what help they require is then passed on to one of the business consultants in their local area who has the particular business knowledge they require. General help leaflets are available online to anyone and events listings on the website give details of training sessions and business events. The need locally is funding for new business but this is not available from Business Eye – they will merely advise on where might be the best place to apply for funding or where to find venture capital. However, office space and administrative back-up is available through the Welsh Assembly Technium network – a series of buildings built around Wales to lease out space and computer networks for fledgling business. Funding is also available for technological innovation and research.

¹⁰ White, S.D., Walkley, C., Radcliffe, J., Edwards, B. *Coping with Access to Services* February 2007. Research Report 12, Wales Rural Observatory, Welsh Assembly Government; Cardiff University; Aberystwyth University. url: http://www.walesruralobservatory.org.uk/reports/english/12_CopingAccessServices.pdf

Farming and tourism are seen as the mainstay of the rural economy. However, dairy and livestock farming have been in trouble for years with subsidy cutting, higher interest rates and retail price increases not being passed back to the farming community. This has demanded a rethink for farmers who have taken on board the need for diversification and have added bed and breakfast and holiday cottages or farm zoos to boost their income. Menter a Busnes is an independent company offering Welsh speakers and people in Wales business support and consultancy. This operates through partnership working and a current project is offering farmers help managing their farms with IT. It appears that the aim of business support is to provide training and encourage networking and link-up with similar business people in the locality or with people who might enhance the business in need, as opposed to providing enterprise funds.

The latest figures on Welsh farm incomes¹¹ shows that the total income on farming (TIFF) has fallen in 2007 by 10.4 percent, from £51.8m in 2006 to £46.4m in 2007. Although gross output increased, sheep output decreased and lower subsidies and higher interest rates resulted in the 10.4 percent fall. This news prompted the NFU Cymru President to say,

“...The figures demonstrate quite clearly that the industry’s income position is wholly unsustainable and if Welsh farmers are to be required to play their part in assuring security of food supplies in the context of the shortages that are likely to emerge in global world markets then this position has to be redressed immediately... unless they can be assured of a return to profitability their position is untenable and unsustainable, with all the ramifications this will have for food supplies and the countryside in general.” Dai Davies, NFU Cymru President¹²

The poor state of the farming industry in rural Wales has prompted online information sites and forums for farmers to join e.g. Cefn Gwlad. The Welsh Assembly Government website has also published a Rural Stress Support Group page which lists telephone helplines for farmers e.g. Farm Crisis Network, Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, Wales Rural Stress Helpline. This is an indication of how bad things are within the industry. For farming business information and help, the NFU Cymru has a ‘Call First’ phonenumber for initial legal and practical help or there is a legal panel for further legal problems and a planning service for all business diversification help. They also have local representatives, and all farmers know their local representative. For those farmers in tune with changing media, information can be received from NFU Cymru online. Out of the academic world there is also the database Land, Life & Leisure available online through the public library service with the CyMAL/Welsh Assembly project library.wales.org. Uptake of this service amongst farmers and general tourism is not high at

¹¹ Aggregate Agricultural Output and Income 2007. Welsh Assembly Government. url: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/40382313/statistics/agriculture/agri2008/sdr26-2008.pdf?lang=en>

¹² NFU Cymru online, 27th February 2008. url: <http://www.nfu-cymru.org.uk/news/991>

present, but it could increase if and when the community are more assured about funding and scope for diversification.

5 ETHNIC MINORITIES

5.1 Inward migration

Since 2004 when the Accession 8 countries joined the EU, Ceredigion and Powys have experienced increasing numbers of economic migrants. There are difficulties calculating the exact number of economic migrants in the two counties due to the fact that numbers are calculated from different sources and official statistics differ depending on the timescale of the figures produced. There are three main sources of information for these figures:

- National Insurance applications (NINOs)
- Workers Registration Scheme (WRS)
- Family Health Service (FHS)

NINOs are allocated by Job Centre Plus and are based on the employee's address. They can be applied for before taking up employment or after starting employment, so figures do not accurately define the migrant labour market, as those people leaving the country do not have to de-register. The WRS applications are approved based on the employer's location and always differ from the NINO figures because employees are not required to de-register if they change employer; they may also live outside the county of their employer and the figures also do not include self-employed people. FHS figures are taken from registrations with GP practices. It has become apparent in Powys that there is a discrepancy between supposed migrants living in the county and those registering with GPs. Local government officers admit they do not really know the exact figures of the migrant population but grudgingly admit it is probably higher than current official estimates. Table 5.1 shows WRS figures up to the 1st Qtr 2007¹³ and Table 5.2 shows NINOs allocated up to 2006¹⁴.

WRS applications up to 1st Qtr. 2007				
	May'04-Dec '05	2006	1 st Qtr. 2007	TOTAL
POWYS	250	245	40	540
CEREDIGION	135	130	25	290

Table 5.1: WRS applications

Source: Welsh Assembly Government

¹³ Statistical Article, Statistics on migrant workers in Wales: Welsh Assembly Government 12th June 2007. URL: <http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/tableviewer/document.aspx?FileId=939>

¹⁴ Op cite. URL: <http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/tableviewer/document.aspx?FileId=939>

NINOs allocated to Accession 8 migrants to April 2006				
	Apr.'03- Apr.'04	Apr.'04- Apr.'05	Apr.'05- Apr.'06	TOTAL
POWYS	10	160	400	570
CEREDIGION	10	80	220	310

Table 5.2: NINOs allocated to A8 migrants Source: Welsh Assembly Government

Table 5.3 shows the spread of all nationalities within Powys and Ceredigion up until 2006. This shows clearly the predominance of Polish migrants.

Country of Origin	AREA		
	Ceredigion	Brecon & Radnorshire	Montgomeryshire
All	490	250	330
Poland	190	100	240
India	20	10	0
Lithuania	0	10	10
Slovakia	30	10	10
South Africa	10	0	10
Australia	10	10	10
Pakistan	10	0	0
France	10	10	10
Germany	10	0	10
Czech	0	10	0
China	50	0	0
Nigeria	10	0	0
Portugal	0	10	0
Italy	10	0	10
Spain	10	10	0
Ireland (Eire)	10	0	0
USA	10	0	0
Philippines	0	0	10
Hungary	0	10	0
New Zealand	10	0	0
Netherlands	10	0	0
Canada	10	0	0
Malaysia	20	0	0
Turkey	10	0	0
Greece	10	0	0
Nepal	0	20	0
Romania	0	10	0
South Korea	10	0	0

Table 5.3: National Insurance Registrations for non-UK nationals 2005/2006¹⁵

Source: NIRS http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/niall/registration_tables.xls

¹⁵ All figures rounded up to the nearest 10.

5.2 Information needs

Coordinators of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes in both counties were approached for access to their students. 52 students were interviewed about their information needs and were asked supplementary questions when the need arose to qualify any misunderstandings. Out of the 52 people, 13 had lived elsewhere in the UK before moving to mid-Wales.

Table 5.4 gives a breakdown of the nationalities involved. Again the predominant nationality is Polish. Other than citizen information, there is a need for these students to have access to graded readers to improve their English skills. In Ceredigion a stock of graded readers were kept in the classroom at the FE College, but there were none in the college library. This was a different story at Powys where the college library had a new stock of such books which were being successfully explored by the students.

ETHNICITY	BRECON	CARDIGAN	ABERYSTWYTH	LLANDRINDOD	TOTAL
Lithuanian	2	0	0	0	2
South African	1	0	0	0	1
Indonesian	1	0	0	0	1
Bulgarian	1	0	0	0	1
Nepalese	3	0	0	0	3
Polish	5	0	7	2	14
Hungarian	2	1	0	0	3
Bangladeshi	0	4	0	3	7
Thailand	0	1	1	5	7
German	0	1	0	0	1
Lebanese	0	1	0	0	1
Vietnamese	0	1	0	0	1
Columbian	0	0	1	0	1
Moldovian	0	0	1	0	1
Slovakian	0	0	1	1	2
Libyan	0	0	1	0	1
Chinese	0	0	1	0	1
Russian	0	0	1	0	1
Spanish	0	0	0	1	1
French	0	0	0	1	1
Turkish	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	15	9	14	14	52

Table 5.4: ESOL students from Colleges of Further Education.

5.2.1 Information on arrival

When asked what particular information they required when they arrived in the area 14 said they needed to find information on where to find English classes, as a priority. This was followed by 11 needing to know how and where to find work in the area. Some of the migrants (15) had no particular information need when they arrived and that was due to several reasons because some were wholly reliant on partners or family members who sorted everything, or they had been in the UK for some time and already knew how things worked and knew where to find information. What is particularly obvious is that many of these people already have informal networks up and running and usually know people before arriving in the area. In fact, part of the reasons for many of them coming to the area is because they know people in the locality and have promises of jobs. Not one person spoken to during this exercise had

been totally alone when coming into the area. Informal conversations with some were also very illuminating as to the presence of local 'gang masters' or 'agents' taking sizeable amounts of money for jobs through contacts made in their home country.

The following table shows the breakdown of information needs on arrival.

N/A	15
Need to find English classes	14
How and where to find work	11
Formal documentation e.g. Nats. Ins.	9
Renting accommodation	9
Bus/train timetables	6
Setting up a bank account	5
Registering with GP	5
Advice about schools	3
Advice on work permits	2
UK culture	2
Local maps	1
Fulltime college courses	1
Information on utilities	1

Table 5.5: Information on arrival.

5.2.2 Sources of information

Next they were asked where they had looked for the information they needed. The majority asked their friends and family for the information they required. The next greatest number of them searched on the internet. Table 5.6 below shows the main sources of information.

N/A	13
Friends and Family	20
Internet	12
Employer	6
Went to library	2
Internet job agency in home country	2
Local paper	2
Internet in home country	1
Family support organisation	1
Bought books	1
Training centre	1
Local council	1
CAB	1
Bus company	1
Local hotels	1

Table 5.6: Where they sourced information needed.

5.2.3 Searched by themselves or with help

As before, the vast majority had help from friends and family and partners. 10 of them said that they had sourced the information themselves with no help and 7 sought help from their employer. Many mentioned their employer and people at their workplace as a great help. This was particularly evident when having to deal with work registrations and sorting out national insurance or accommodation needs. Table 5.7 shows whether they sought out information themselves or through others.

N/A	11
Friends	16
Family	13
Partner	10
Self	10
Employer	7
College	3
Library	1
Health Visitor	1
Job Centre	1

Table 5.7: Searched by themselves or with help.

5.2.4 Greatest help finding information

When they were asked who or what had been the greatest help to them in finding information nearly 50 percent named friends. Again, the employer rated pretty high up on the list as the greatest help to them.

Friends	21
Partner	17
Employer	11
Family	10
Internet	3
Newspapers	1
Neighbours	1
College in home country	1

Table 5.8: Greatest help

5.2.5 Use of library services

Just over 58 percent stated that they used library services but the overriding use was for the Internet to use email and read foreign newspapers online. Those who did not use the services said they had no use for them. One respondent said that if she wanted books she would go out and buy them. Where there is a language problem, it is easy to understand why they would not wish to use the library service. One person made no comment as to why they did not use the service, but as it was one of the people who filled out the questionnaire with the tutor, there was no opportunity to follow it up. The ones

Yes	30
Internet	21
Borrowing books	15
Reading newspapers	7
Local information	5
Music CDs	2
DVDs	1
No	22
No need to use services	12
Lack of English	5
Unaware of library	3
Too busy	1
No Comment	1

Table 5.9: Use of library services

who said they were unaware of the service were Thai, Chinese and Lebanese and had not been in the area for very long. All the students were obviously aware of the college libraries but these showed a complete lack of awareness of the public service available.

5.2.6 Most important information

When asked what they considered to be the most important information for them and their families, most answered that it was not applicable to them. For those who answered, the top of the list was health information and where to find services, followed by where to find English classes. Given the circumstances of interviews taking place at ESOL classes, this may indicate a cultural deference.

N/A	16
Health information - GPs	7
Classes for English	6
Residency test	5
Finding jobs	4
UK Culture	4
School availability	4
Accommodation	3
Financial – NI, salary deductions	3
Family entertainment	2
Sports	2
University/college courses	2
Back to learning classes	1
Training courses	1
Local information	1
Benefits information	1
How to become a doctor in UK	1

Table 5.10: Most important information for family.

5.2.7 Business information

Only 7 of the respondents were considering their own business. The only self-employed person, up and running, had moved into the area from London and had received all the help and business information from a Polish accountant there. Others were just scouting around to see what opportunities there were locally; so there were no serious needs for business information in this group. The Welsh Assembly funds the Ethnic Business Support Unit, which was set up to help ethnic minority business in Wales. One of the local consultants spoken to confirmed that recent help had been given to ethnic minority people wishing to open a Jamaican restaurant, an Asian newsagent and a Polish online sales business, but confirmation could not be given that they were up and running. Table 5.11 shows the figures for interest in setting up a business.

N/A	45
Where have you looked?	7
Just looking around locality	1
Helped by Polish accountant	1
Internet	2
University law department	1
Business centre	1
Business Eye	1

Table 5.11: Business information.

5.2.8 Looking for work

Whilst speaking with the respondents and employers, it is apparent that the majority of migrants use their informal networks to find work. Most of this group had found their jobs through word of mouth and the HR Director of one firm in Powys confirmed that their employees arrived through word of mouth, being brought in by current employees that know them or their friends. Their networks are very strong, and apart from the few women who are here through marriage, all had connections through friends or family. Two people spoke of unfair practice with 'job agencies' and 'gang masters' to whom they had paid money to secure work in Powys.

Word of mouth	18
Friends	15
Family	11
Unemployed	11
Before coming into UK	7
Job Centre	5
Internet	4
Agency	4
Partner	3
Local paper	2
Advertisement in library	1

Self-Employed	1
N/A	47
If looking – where?	
Job Centre	4
Local newspaper	2
Family	1

Table 5.12: How work was acquired.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 Need for more information?

There is something to be said about the marketing speak, “...*the customer doesn’t know what they want until they have it...*”¹⁶ and there is more than a little truth in the concept of information overload; something that has become very apparent over the last ten years with the proliferation of email and Internet use. When reviewing what is currently available to the local community in Powys and Ceredigion, it is obvious that there is a great deal of information available and where access is difficult, measures have been tried and put in place to counteract any lack of access e.g., mobile libraries, outreach services with CAB. There is a prominent charitable sector that is trying to bridge the gap between what is and what is not available through the local authority social services, and the common thread between them all is lack of funding; in the last few weeks the public library in Aberystwyth has cut its hours due to lack of funding.

The spread of Internet use has encouraged the setting up of more and more online services, and this is particularly true in rural Wales where Welsh Assembly Government funds, through EU Objective One or other European funding streams have enabled tourist sites, environmental sites, rural health, rural business and charitable sites to have an online access. However, as with all funding, it is not ongoing forever and then the question of sustainability appears. There are still broadband/ADSL blackspots in rural Ceredigion and Powys, so these online services remain unavailable to those people living in those areas.

6.2 Awareness

Lack of awareness and need of information services was apparent with a few of the ethnic migrants spoken with at the colleges, particularly those who had arrived recently. However, this may be due to cultural differences and expectations. Certainly, one would expect that over time, when such people have grasped a working knowledge of English and what is available to the public here, in terms of services, their attitudes will change and demands may increase. The National Information Forum, in association with the Community Services Group of CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) produced a booklet as a starter guide on Where To Find Information¹⁷ in 2007. This is available free of charge in hardcopy or online and was published as a signpost guide for disadvantaged groups to discourage social exclusion.

¹⁶ Attributed to Michael Porter, Harvard Business School

¹⁷ Where To Find Information: A Starter Guide. The National Information Forum and CILIP. 2007. url: <http://www.nif.org.uk/Where%20to%20find%20web.pdf>

APPENDIX 1

Questions for different strands:

Health directed at Community Health Councils (CHCs):

1. What type of enquiries/complaints do the CHCs (Community Health Councils) receive from the public?
2. What quantity of enquiry is received per month/per annum?
3. Other than their websites, how do CHCs distribute information to the public or increase public awareness?
4. Is there any link-up with the local libraries? If not, do they foresee any possible link-up?
5. Is there a standard for CHC liaison with voluntary bodies?
6. What language translation of information is available?

Health directed at Health librarians, Public libraries on Book Prescription:

1. How much patient/carer information is available at the library?
2. How many patients/patient representatives approach the library for information?
3. How much support group information do you keep at the library?
4. How do you feel you could help with increasing awareness of patient liaison or link-up with the CHCs?

Economic directed at Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Business Eye, Communities First, PAVO, CAVO, Job Centres, NFU, Local Authorities:

1. Other than websites and local offices, how is information on your services distributed?
2. How much of your information is available at local libraries?
3. How do you feel an link-up with the library service might benefit potential clients?
4. What is your current standard on translation services for potential clients?
5. What changes have taken place over the last few years?

EU MIGRANTS (Key Informants new immigrants in area, PAVO, CAVO, Ethnic Minority Network, County councils)

1. What information did you need when you arrived?
2. How did you go about finding the information you needed?
3. Have you ever used the library service? For what? If not, why not?
4. What is your main channel of information i.e. through service information available, through friends/family, local immigrant population, support groups, religious groups?
5. Have you encountered translation problems with information you have needed? If yes, how were these resolved?
6. What health issues might you/your family need information for e.g. children, young people, older people.

7. If you have started or wish to start your own business, what information did you require and where did you find it?

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